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SUBJECT: MALAYSIAN THOUGHTS ON BALI "TERRORIST USE OF THE
INTERNET" CONFERENCE AND NEXT STEPS

REF: STATE 123205

¶1. (SBU) In response to reftel, Regional RSI Coordinator met with Bali Conference participants Devi Annamalai of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), and Mohammed Zaini Akhir of the Royal Malaysian Police Counter-Terrorism Office, to discuss their thoughts on the conference and ideas for future conferences.

¶2. (SBU) Both Devi, who serves as Director of the MCMC's Monitoring and Enforcement Division, and Akhir, Deputy Superintendent of the Counter-Terrorism Office, agreed the Bali conference had been useful, in particular in encouraging a level of collaboration between their two agencies that had not previously existed. Since the conference, CT Police and the MCMC had established a dynamic working relationship involving sharing information on terrorist websites.

¶3. (SBU) In regard to future conferences, Deputy Superintendent Akhir told us that his office's discussions of the Bali conference had pointed to the need for a follow-on conference addressing ways to counter violent extremism (CVE). The discussions of the internet in Bali had highlighted the problem of use of the internet to recruit terrorists; what was needed, Akhir said, was a discussion of what countries in the region were doing to counter the terrorist narrative. Each country was taking a particular tack when it came to CVE, and some were making more headway than others. Akhir thought that bringing regional (not limited to the triborder) countries together to share lessons learned would be a useful first step in improving CVE efforts. Akhir emphasized these discussions could include but should not be limited to what each country was doing with the internet. The topic was much broader and should properly encompass the work being done by civil society as well as by governments in reaching out to potential extremist recruits.

¶4. (SBU) Akhir and Devi both thought the discussions in Bali on the legal aspects of the internet raised more questions than they answered. Both saw the need for greater understanding of national and international laws and conventions that applied to the internet, to facilitate their efforts to obtain information from overseas law enforcement agencies.

¶5. (SBU) Finally, Deputy Superintendent Akhir felt that a future conference addressing these topics should be aimed at a more senior level audience, similar to that of the Bali conference. He stressed that the benefits of any regional conference would be diluted if the participants were not at a policy-making level and were not authorized to reach across borders to make contact with their counterparts in other countries. Akhir also said that, while getting civil society participation in future conferences was a good idea, at least part of any conference should be limited to law enforcement and government officials in order to facilitate discussion of sensitive intelligence topics.

KEITH